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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/01/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: FOUR DETAINED MINORS RELEASED FOLLOWING
PRESSURE BY UNICEF

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 755

[B](#). TEGUCIGALPA 744

[C](#). TEGUCIGALPA 661

[D](#). TEGUCIGALPA 529

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#). (C) Summary. Four minors detained on July 25 by Honduran security forces near Las Manos during pro-Zelaya protests at the border of Honduras and Nicaragua were released on August 27 and 28 following pressure by the local UNICEF representative. In a recent investigation, UNICEF was unable to corroborate early allegations that the Honduran military has forcibly recruited minors. In an unrelated case, the Supreme Court formally charged 16 year old Sergio Raul Jerezano Cruz for his involvement in an anti-coup demonstration on August 13 in Tegucigalpa. End Summary.

[2](#). (C) UNICEF Representative in Honduras Sergio Guimaraes told Poloff on August 31 that four minors detained during a pro-Zelaya demonstration on July 25 by Honduran security forces near the border with Nicaragua were released on August 27 and 28 (Ref C). The four were detained along with pro-Zelaya organizer Rafael Alegria and other pro-Zelaya protestors (who had been released within 24 hours). Guimaraes stated he met with Special Prosecutor for Children's Issues Nora Urbina on August 19 and urged her to intervene in the case. Urbina told Guimaraes that the reason for the minors' detention at a government youth detention center was the inability of authorities to reach their parents. Guimaraes told Poloff he replied by giving Urbina the cell phone numbers of the parents that he himself obtained directly from the minors. Guimaraes said that he believed the meeting with Urbina led to the minors' release. The four minors are: Michael Corrales (age 13), Bryan Hernesto Avila Garcia (age 15), David Torres Reyes (age 17), Frank Anderson Corrales (age 16).

[3](#). (C) following a trip to northern Honduras on August 26, UNICEF representatives reported to Poloff no/no evidence to substantiate claims that the Honduran military is forcibly conscripting minors for service (Ref D). The group did find evidence that since June 28, various minors have been detained by the military and released within 24 hours without documentation of the detention. UNICEF also documented two cases of minors who claim being mistreated by police following the August 14 protest in Choloma (Ref A). The alleged victims are Grace Judith Rivera Castro (age 16) and Kevin Chavez Reyes (age 15).

[4](#). (C) UNICEF representative told PolOff on August 31 that he visited 16-year-old Sergio Raul Jerezano Cruz who was arrested on August 13 at a pro-Zelaya demonstration in

Tegucigalpa but is now in the care of his parents. Jerezano is the only minor known to have pending criminal charges based on participation in pro-Zelaya demonstrations. The charges include robbery, vandalism, illicit demonstration, and sedition (Ref B).

15. (C) Comment: These cases show a continued disregard by Honduran authorities to provide due process to all those detained in association with anti-coup demonstrations. In the case of the four minors detained for almost one month, it was apparent that Honduran authorities had not even asked the minors themselves for their families' contact information. This and other reports point to a disturbing pattern of the use of arbitrary detention as a punishment for political expression. End Comment.
LLORENS